

HASC Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairman McKeon. Mr. Chairman, in order to accommodate the committee's questions sooner, I'll keep my remarks brief and ask that my full statement be included for the record.

(Wait for response)

Chairman McKeon, Congressman Smith, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss United States Pacific Command and the Asia-Pacific region. I'd like to extend our best wishes to Representative Giffords for a speedy recovery. As a "Navy Spouse" she's a key member of our military family ... Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

PAUSE

I'd like to begin by recognizing my wife Donna who's been at my side for 37 years. She's an outstanding ambassador for our Nation and a tireless advocate for the men and women of our military and their families. She recently accompanied me to Japan where she met with service spouses and then traveled into the tsunami stricken region to visit a shelter for 1200 displaced Japanese survivors.

On that note, I'd like to begin by offering our deepest sympathy for the people of Japan who've been affected by an unprecedented confluence

of earthquakes, tsunami and consequent nuclear accidents. In the midst of tragedy, the people of northern Honshu have demonstrated remarkable courage and resolve. Their ability to endure, to assist one another through hardship, clean-up their communities, and recover their lives should be an inspiration to all of us.

The devastation Donna and I observed from the 11 March natural disasters was staggering, and the significance of the continuing nuclear crisis adds a level of disaster response complexity and urgency that's without peer. U.S. Pacific Command remains fully committed to supporting response efforts by the Japanese Self Defense Forces. I established a Joint Support Force in Japan whose mission includes Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, including support to the Japanese Defense Forces who are spearheading the Fukushima nuclear accidents' response. At the same time, we're guarding the safety of U.S. service personnel and their families, whether they're operating in direct support to the relief effort or carrying out their normal duties at their home bases. A second PACOM Joint Task Force planned and executed the Voluntary Departure of spouses and dependents and maintains follow-on departure plans should they be required.

The level of cooperation and collaboration between the service men and women of the U.S. and Japan has been remarkable, and the job they're doing together is inspiring. Worthy of special recognition is General Oriki, Japan's Chief of the Joint Staff, for his exceptional leadership of nearly 100,000 Japanese service members who are engaged in this effort. Our ability to quickly and effectively support their work is testimony to the maturity and strength of the U.S./Japan alliance.

No doubt Japan will emerge from this terrible combination of disasters a stronger nation. Our hopes and prayers continue to go out to the Japanese people.

PAUSE

Natural disasters are but one of many challenges facing USPACOM throughout the Asia Pacific. This vast region that covers half the earth is unique both in its size and diversity and importance to the future of every other nation in the World. Containing the great populations, economies, and militaries, along with more than 5 trillion dollars of seaborne commerce per year, this region has been and will continue to be of utmost importance to the United States. USPACOM's role is to oversee its security and to help keep the peace, both in our Nation's interest and in the interests of our five treaty Allies and many regional partners.

The security environment is never static. Rather, it is characterized by a dynamic range of 36 nations whose varying personalities and influence more or less affect the neighborhood. Each of our four sub-regions; Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Oceania contain unique challenges and challengers that test our collective commitment to security and peace. Yet, in the face of actors such as North Korea, transnational extremist organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jammah Islamia, and Abu Sayyef Group, and uncertainties created by a rapidly expanding and assertive Chinese military, multi-lateral organizations such as ASEAN and the East Asian Summit, and bonds between the U.S., its Allies and partners serve to moderate the challenges, deter the challengers and provide forums for advancing the collective security of the Asia Pacific region.

Overall, the prospects for continued peace, economic growth and advancing security cooperation in the region remain promising. Though, we're repeatedly reminded that only through the U.S.' ability and willingness to underwrite that security through its continuous presence, extended deterrence, and protection of the global commons upon which the region's livelihood depends - will regional peace and security endure.

Every day, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and civilians work to advance security in the Asia Pacific. Their success has long been

enabled by this Committee's sustained support. You've provided the service men and women of USPACOM with the most technically-advanced military systems in the world, and a quality of life worthy of the contributions of this all-volunteer force. On behalf of the more than 330,000 men and women of the United States Pacific Command, thank you. And, thank you for this opportunity to testify on our defense posture in this most vital region of the World.

I look forward to your questions.